



**To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors**

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## **Bill Vanderwende received the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service to Agriculture**



On Saturday, January 22, Delaware Secretary of Agriculture, Ed Kee, presented the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service to Bill Vanderwende, from Harrington. The award was given in recognition of meritorious service to Delaware agriculture.

Kee said, "One of my important missions as Secretary of Agriculture is to both encourage and recognize individuals who exemplify the timeless traditions of family farming and faithful community service that make our Delaware farmers true examples of the very best that lies in each of us. This is what the Secretary's Award represents."

In his remarks about Vanderwende, Kee noted the following:

- This year's award recipient is a longstanding member of the farming community and a tireless public servant. Through his actions and hard work, he has shown his dedication to his family, his faith, and his fellow farmers. He has shown time and again the importance of balancing profit with preservation, and tradition with technological advancement. He is as equally committed to agriculture as he is to protecting and conserving our environmental resources for future generations.
- A proud member of Harrington High School's Class of 1951, he married his lovely wife Ellen a year after graduation. For well over four decades, he and his wife, along with their four children, ten grandchildren and several employees, have run a dairy, grain and vegetable farming operation in Bridgeville, Sussex County. Along with his family, he currently milks over 300 head and tills approximately 3,500 acres.
- As a farmer, he and his family have been honored with a long list of accolades:
  - Delaware's *Outstanding Young Farmer* by the Jaycees in 1968
  - Named a *Master Farmer* by Pennsylvania Farmer and State Extension Services in 1977
  - *Environmental Control Award* in 1987

**-More-**

- Sussex County Service Club Award for Outstanding Service to Agriculture in 1989
- Farm Bureau *Farm Family of the Year in 1993*
- Delaware 4-H Alumnus Award in 1994
  
- As a citizen, he has served on an impressive array of civic and business groups, including:
  - His local school board
  - Membership in several farm cooperatives
  - *Member* of the Bridgeville Kiwanis Club
  - *Director* on the Delaware State Fair Board
  - *Manager* - Marshyhope Tax Ditch
  - *Corporate Director* - Southern States Cooperative, Inc. Richmond Virginia
  - *Kent-Sussex Advisory Board Manager* - Wilmington Trust
  
- Most importantly, he has been a leader in the agricultural community, serving as:
  - *Past member* - Governor's Advisory Council on Agriculture
  - *Member* - Governor's Advisory Council on Soil and Water
  - *Vice-Chairman* - Delaware Aglands Preservation Foundation Board of Trustees
  - *Chairman* - Delaware Nutrient Management Commission since 1999
  
- True to his belief in fostering stewardship of our priceless resources, he has served with distinction on the Sussex County Conservation District Board of Supervisors for 20 years, where he has been Chairman since 1992. His hard work was instrumental in bringing USDA technical and financial assistance to the Upper Nanticoke River Watershed. This five-year program will assist farmers with installing best management practices to ensure agriculture remains a part of the Sussex County landscape.

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